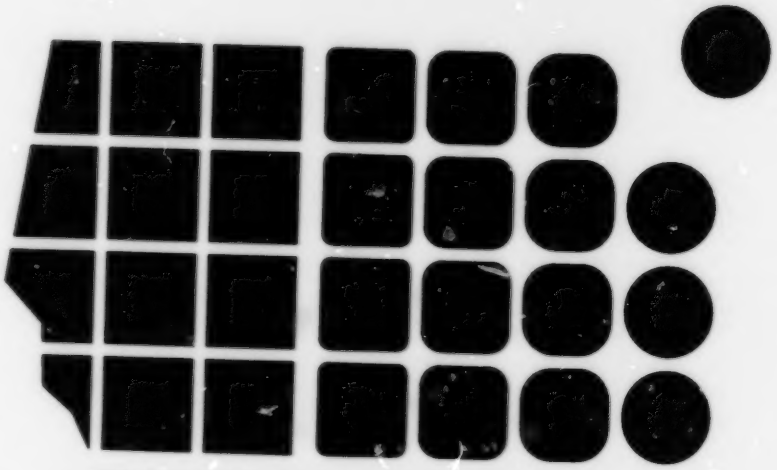
Annual Report



THE PREMIER'S COUNCIL
ON THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
Alberta

1989-90

91-02432/

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Message from the Chair

Since 1987 when Premier Don Getty appointed the steering committee that was charged with the responsibility to develop terms of reference for the Premier's Council, the strategy has been to involve all persons interested in the issues surrounding disability. The net result of this process of involvement has been general consensus in support of the Premier's Council and the work which we have undertaken. The process of consensus building was carried on through the creation and ultimately the acceptance of the Council's philosophical paper and belief system, Towards a New Vision of Abilities in Alberta, and subsequently the Action Plan which was released publicly on March 30, 1990.

The key element in this consensus building process is the fact that we always try to keep the focus on the issues that affect persons with disabilities rather than focusing on the needs associated with specific disabilities.

This attempt at involving all stakeholders in order to build a broad base of support has been both valuable and effective, and has been absolutely critical to our work on behalf of Albertans with disabilities. The apparent fragmentation of agendas among stakeholders has been identified as a barrier to change in the past. By coming together to create a unified set of goals, we believe that those individual agendas can ultimately be accomplished.

As a Council, we were extremely pleased that the Provincial Cabinet, on behalf of the Government of Alberta, adopted the vision statement in November 1989, and publicly pronounced their decision at a press conference on December 14th.

At the same time, the Premier's Council promised to deliver an action plan that would make specific recommendations to Government by the end of March 1990. The Council delivered on this promise when it released its Action Plan on March 30th at a press conference held in Edmonton.

The strategy for follow-up to the Action Plan includes working with the targeted recommendations and those government departments that are specifically implicated, as well as an intense lobbying process to have the Government of Alberta adopt the Action Plan as its own. If this happens, the Premier's Council will then assist government with the implementation process by serving as a resource.

All of our efforts to date have focused on the Province of Alberta, for that is where the Council's mandate lies. While there remains much work to be done here, we believe that the pressures to change must be exerted beyond the provincial government level to the municipal and federal levels. Provincial and local organizations will need to carry the agenda to their communities and it is our hope as a Council that Alberta can make the necessary changes to bring about equality for persons with disabilities, and in the process provide the leadership to initiate major change of a similar nature at the federal level. For its own part, the Premier's Council meets annually with similar councils from other provinces to examine issues that we believe need to be addressed federally, and to develop strategies to get these issues on the federal agenda.

In closing, I take this opportunity to thank Premier Getty; the Honourable Jim Dinning, Minister Responsible for the Council; all members of the legislature; department officials;Task Team and sub-committee members; community organizations and individuals who have given us direction, guidance, support and constructive criticism. Last but not least, thank you to the Council members themselves, and to our very hard working staff at the secretariat.

Executive Director's Report

Over the past one and one half years, the Council has paved the way for meaningful improvements to programs and policies affecting persons with disabilities. Towards a New Vision of Abilities in Alberta rationalized the need for transformational change in public policy to better reflect emerging attitudes of acceptance and equality. The document also presented a framework for policy development and articulated a set of principles to guide policy review.

Initially, the vision paper was distributed to all community stakeholders for discussion, response, and endorsement. The positive response was overwhelming, with more than 120 formal letters of support directed to Premier Getty from boards of directors of organizations representing disabled persons. Numerous organizations have begun re-examining their programs and services in the context of the philosophy and principles outlined in the vision paper.

In the fall of 1989, the Premier's Council delivered the vision paper to Premier Getty with a request that his government formally endorse the document, and sanction its philosophy and principles. In the process of "selling" the vision paper to government, we had the opportunity to meet individually with almost every cabinet minister to discuss the implications on individual departments as well as on government as a whole.

In December 1989, Premier Getty announced his Government's endorsement of the vision paper and assured Albertans that the principles contained therein would guide government in this important policy area. Through consultation and consensus building, consumers and their representative organizations have been instrumental in successfully articulating a vision for the future.

Commencing in March 1989, the Premier's Council initiated a major review of government policies and programs affecting persons with disabilities. As opposed to analyzing the individual programs within individual departments, we consulted with consumers and identified the 10 most important issue areas affecting their daily lives and used those issues as the basis for our initial policy review. In each issue area, we asked people with various disabilities what barriers prevented them from achieving their potential. We then looked across government departments to identify how policies could be changed, enhanced, or created to substantially reduce those barriers.

This process involved extensive consultation over a 12 month period with consumers, their representative organizations, and government. The document which resulted is called the Action Plan, and contains 55 recommendations directed to 13 government departments with specific implementation time frames. The Action Plan was released publicly on March 30, 1990 and, as with the vision paper, we will be seeking Cabinet acceptance of the document.

The greatest challenge is still ahead. Without continued strong commitment from government, it will be just another good plan, which brings me to consideration of other work complementary to the Action Plan.

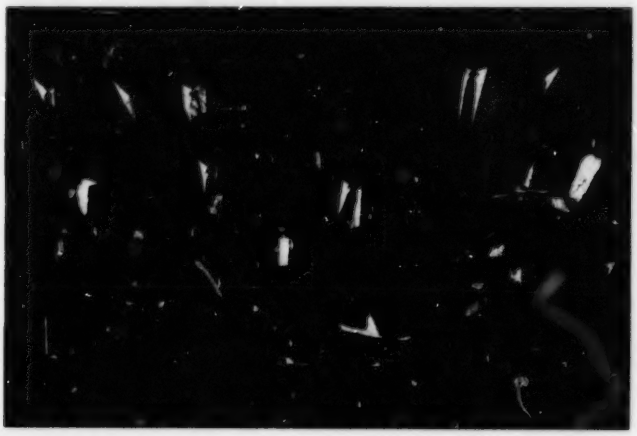
During the last eighteen months, two other reports have been released for public discussion: Claiming My Future and the Rainbow Report. Each of these is predicated upon principles parallel to those of the Council and will, in its own way, support the goals of the Council. It is important that an overall plan for the implementation of these reports be developed.

These reports come at a very opportune time. Many areas of public policy are being reviewed, government is receptive to change and Albertans are being consulted as a normal part of the process. We look forward to a new era in policy development.

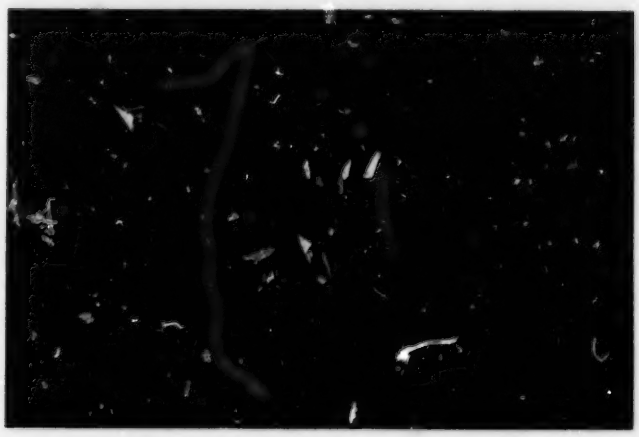
Council Membership and Secretariat

The last year has seen some changes in the membership of the Council due to the resignations of several Council members. Regrettably, in the past year Michael Quinlan, Gillian Oliver, and Claudia Moore have, for various reasons, stepped down from their positions as Council members. Vacant positions have been filled by Kaye Brock, Ray Hegerat, Martin Goldstein, and Everett Soop who were appointed on March 29, 1990 for terms of three years.

Council meetings for the 1989-90 fiscal year took place in Red Deer on June 17, 1989 and in Edmonton on October 27/28, 1989, December 14/15/16, 1989, and March 10, 1990.



Back row (l to r): Randy Hogle, Kaye Brock, Ray Hegerat, Norma Stasiuk, Sandy Morrice, Cheryl Crocker, Peter Aubry, and Martin Goldstein. Front row (l to r): Gary McPherson, Harvey Ball, Jim Vargo, and Jean Packer. Missing: Wendy Bryden and Everett Soop.



Secretariat (l to r): Dale Jacobs (Information Officer), Fran Vargo (Project Coordinator), Eric Boyd (Executive Director), Tina Jorgenson (Receptionist), and Wendy Buckley (Executive Assistant).

Activity Summary

Policy Review - Community Consultation

The major activity that occupied the Premier's Council during 1989-90 was the development of an action plan based on a comprehensive review of policies and programs within the provincial government that effect the participation of people with disabilities in society. In keeping with the Council's principle, "consultation with consumers", two task teams were struck to assist the Council in the policy review and development of recommendations.

Through various information gathering measures conducted in 1988-89, nine subject areas had been identified as priority issues by stakeholders. These nine areas were clustered into two groupings that had as a primary focus "living" and "working" in the community. Task team members were recruited from the various stakeholder groups, including government departments, in accordance with their expertise in each of the issue areas. There were eight members assigned to the Living in the Community task team and 11 members on the Working in the Community task team. The members were as follows:

- Allan Douglas, Family and Social Services, Chair of the "working" team
- Gail Roberson, Alberta Association of Rehabilitation Centres
- Iris Saunders, Employment Services for the Physically Disabled
- Gordon Bullivant, Foothills Academy
- Harvey Finnestad, Education Response Centre
- Tom Parker, Canadian Paraplegic Association
- Patrick Bickersteth, Worker's Compensation Board Rehabilitation Centre
- Bill McKeown, Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Wendy Bryden, Premier's Council member
- Brenda Moore, Disabled Student Services Coordinator, Grant McEwan Community College
- Maureen Murphy-Black, Family and Social Services
- James Vargo, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, Chair of the "living" team
- Helen Stacey, Family and Social Services
- Susan Law, Easter Seal Ability Council
- Shirley Crozier, Alberta Children's Hospital/Cerebral Palsy Association
- Valerie Bowen-Richardson, homemaker
- Linda Stanton, Educational Consultants for the Sensory Impaired
- Muriel Scott, Northern Alberta Brain Injury Society
- Wayne Wright, Michener Centre

The task teams travelled across the province, receiving 62 oral submissions and 63 written ones. Over a ten month period, they met to discuss, debate, develop and revise recommendations that would overcome the barriers to full participation for people with disabilities. The

Activity Summary

result was the Action Plan released on March 31, 1990.

The work of the task teams was enhanced and facilitated by two subcommittees that were struck to provide disability-specific input in the areas of mental illness and deafness. Membership of these subcommittees also came from relevant stakeholder groups and the chairpersons sat ex officio on the task teams.

Public Education

The Council's newsletter, The Status Report, continues to be the means by which many stakeholders are kept informed of Council activities. In addition to this, more targeted activities were initiated during the past year.

Meetings with provincial organizations - Two meetings were held during the year with the executive directors and chairpersons of the boards of disability-related organizations that have a provincial focus. Through these meetings, Council keeps these stakeholders apprised of Council activities and provides the opportunity for dialogue around issues and concerns of mutual interest.

Other activities - In an effort to carry the message about what Council is trying to achieve and to maintain the support of stakeholders, members of the Council and secretariat spoke to 33 special interest groups and participated in 26 conferences between June 1989 and March 1990. This level of participation is an important component of the public education strategy of the Council and goes hand in hand with the many meetings with government departments and with Ministers, as related elsewhere in this report. There were five media events in which the Council participated, with many more anticipated following the release of the Action Plan.

Clipping service - The Council has engaged a newspaper clipping service to assist in maintaining awareness of disability-related issues in the news. Clippings are received and reviewed on a daily basis, allowing timely responses to be sent when they are deemed appropriate. In particular, letters of congratulations are sent when Council learns of programs and events that support the goals of integration and independence for people with disabilities. Letters are also written about the use of offensive language and as a means of informing groups and individuals of Council's position on current issues.

Special Education Review

The Premier's Council was among the stakeholders invited to participate on the Steering Committee for the Special Education Review announced by the Honourable Jim Dinning, Minister of Education, in November 1989. The review is a two stage process, with stage one to be completed in April 1990 and the second in the fall of 1990.

Topics identified for review include funding, coordination of support services, and outcome indicators. Three technical committees are responsible for carrying out the work required, under the direction of the Steering Committee, to answer the questions posed for the review. The issues under study were among those identified by the Council's Action Plan as being problematic.

Long Term Care Study

In March 1989 a study was jointly sponsored by the Premier's Council and the Department of Health to address the concerns which were not addressed in the Mirosh Report (''**A New Vision for Long Term Care**''). Specifically, an integrated service continuum for young adults with physical disabilities was to be developed as a result of this study. The Advisory Committee, chaired by Council Member Cheryl Crocker, examined the long term care needs of young people with disabilities (18-64 years of age) and made recommendations necessary to meet their unique needs.

The largest amount of input centred around the issues of institutional versus community care and control over the chosen option. It became apparent from most people who were consulted that the system should be consumer driven and that the consumer should have the ultimate choice of institutional or community living. Support in this choice means that living in the community must exist as a real option for young adults with physical disabilities.

The report,entitled ''**Macro to Micro**'' and released in June 1989, focusses on the need for support in the community to facilitate independent living for young adults with physical disabilities. Included in these supports are discharge planning, transitional living opportunities, out-patient rehabilitation, case coordination, and the possibility of an individualized funding option. It recognized that young persons with disabilities must have greater input into their living arrangements, whether these be institutional or community based, within an integrated system of service. In short, the report emphasizes consumer choice, with community placement as a viable option in the service continuum.

Alberta Information Network

Access to information has been an ongoing concern for persons with disabilities and the Premier's Council. In 1988, the Walter Dinsdale Centre was commissioned to prepare a feasibility study for an Alberta Information Network. This study explored the ways in which such a network should be developed and who should be involved in its development.

Subsequently, the existence of the Alberta Centre for Well-Being was brought to the attention of the Council and through discussions it was learned that the goals of the Alberta Information Network coincide with those of the Centre. An arrangement was then made for the Alberta Information Network to be housed as a separate project within the Centre and it was agreed that the Centre would work in consultation with the Council, the Walter Dinsdale Centre, and other stakeholder groups in the development of the database. During 1990, a stakeholder advisory committee will be established to guide in this development. These directions, as well as a recommendation for the provision of funds for ongoing maintenance and development, are reflected within the Premier's Council Action Plan.

At this time, the commitment of the Premier's Council involves the provision of one full-time Project Manager and hardware totalling $175,000. Much credit must also go to the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans and Executive Council for the acquisition of the computer equipment.

It is intended that the Alberta Information Network database will initially be accessed through the DISC network, with access to human operators to follow at a later date. Consumers, agencies and professionals will then be able to access a broad spectrum of information of importance to persons with disabilities.

STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE

Year Ended March 31st, 1990
Unaudited

	AUTHORIZED	EXPENDED
MANPOWER GROUP		
Salaries - Permanent	$177,000.00	$59,166.60
Salaries - Non-permanent	——	93,236.86
Wages	20,000.00	2,088.58
Payments to Contract Employees	30,000.00	69,936.00
Employer Contributions	16,300.00	14,665.73
Allowances & Benefits	1,800.00	2,337.21
TOTAL MANPOWER GROUP	245,100.00	241,430.98
SUPPLIES & SERVICES GROUP		
Travel Expenses	$89,800.00	$64,254.29
Freight & Postage	15,000.00	16,203.27
Rentals	35,000.00	7,950.20
Telephone & Communications	25,000.00	12,718.08
Repairs & Maintenance	5,000	443.15
Contract Services	211,600.00	274,957.77
Data Processing Services	2,500.00	1,970.12
Hosting	9,700.00	8,158.47
Other Purchased Services	——	12,595.29
Materials & Supplies	55,500.00	11,851.05
TOTAL SUPPLIES & SERVICES GROUP	449,100.00	411,101.69
FIXED ASSETS GROUP		
Data Processing Equipment	$ 23,000.00	$ 8,819.00
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS GROUP	$23,000.00	$ 8,819.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE 1989/90	$717,200.00	$661,351.67